

<sup>69</sup> The Case and Title of *Henry Robinson* of *London* Esq; unto a Deputation and Management of both the *Letter-Offices*, together with the profits thereunto belonging, deriv'd from the Right Honourable *Charls* Lord *Stanhop*, unto *Endymion Porter* Esq. deceased, and *George Porter* Esq. his Son, and from them unto the said *Henry Robinson*, as it was represented unto the Convention sitting at the time of his Majesties happy Restoration, which afterwards settled the same upon his Majesty, without any consideration unto the said *H. Robinson* for the claim and improvement of the said Offices from about 3000<sup>l</sup> per annum to about 30000<sup>l</sup> per annum, to the undoing the said *H. Robinson*, his Wife and Children.

**T**hat the Office of Postmaster General of the Dominions of *England*, is one of the ancientest Offices of *England*.

That the nominating of all Postmasters, and carriage of all *Letters* both *Inland* and *Forraign*, both of the *Publick* and *Particulars*, are members of, and incident and belonging unto the said Office, together with the Profits and Perquisites thereby accruing; as appears by ancient deeds and Custome beyond the memory of man.

That *John* Lord *Stanhop* had a grant of the said Office in the 32. of *Eliz.* 1577. under the Broad-Seal of *England*, and by himself his Deputy and Agents enjoyed the carriage of all *Letters* by *Post*, both *Forraign* and *Inland*, for about 40. years, untill he dyed.

That *Charls* Lord *Stanhop*, who is still living, had a reversion of the said Office, and by himself his Deputies and Agents, enjoyed the carriage of all *Letters*, until he was illegally disturbed by one *Mathew Dequester*, who having been the Lord *Stanhops* Deputy for the carriage of *Forraign* and *Irish Letters*, about 20. years together, under pretence of a grant of a new Office by him obtained, upon untrue suggestions for services to be done out of the *Kings Dominions* (a reversion whereof Mr. *William Wishe-rings* then claim'd by) by authority thereof took upon him the carriage of *Forraign Letters*.

That in the year 1624. the said *Charls* Lord *Stanhop* brought his action against the said *Dequester* for taking upon him the carriage of *Merchants Letters*, and receiving moneys for the Postage thereof from *London* to  
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*Antwerp*, without the License, and against the will of him the said Lord Stanhop, who is Postmaster General, and recovered a Verdict against the said Dequester.

That the Parliament in the 4<sup>th</sup> of the late King, upon report of a select Committee, taking notice of the said *Dequesters* undue suggestions for the gaining of the said Patent, for services to be done in Forraign Parts, out of the Kings Dominions, and of the Lord Stanhops Verdict against Dequester, did declare, and give Judgment against Dequesters said Patent, in favour of the Lord Stanhops said Patent.

That the said *Henry Robinson* and his said Trustees, have by several mean Assignments lawfully conveyed unto them the Deputation, Management, and profits of the said Offices during the life of the said *Charles Lord Stanhop*, who is still living.

That the said *Henry Robinson* was in possession of the said Offices at the first assembling of the Long Parliament.

That Mr. *Thomas Witherings* who procured a reversion of *Dequesters* Patent, for services to be done out of the Kings Dominions, well knowing the invalidity thereof, made over his Interest to the Right Honourable *Robert* late Earl of *Warwick*, upon which one Mr. *Pulley* and others found means to have a Male of Forraign Letters to be betrayed into their hands, whereby the said Earl of *Warwick* came to get the possession of the Forraign Letter Office.

Hereupon the said *Henry Robinson* was prevailed upon to call in *Edmund Prideaux* Esq; deceased, then a Member of the Honble House of Commons, to protect him (as he hop'd) in the more sure keeping of the Inland Letter Office in *Bartholmew Lane*, & recovery of the Forraign from the said Earl of *Warwick*; but instead thereof, the said *Edmund Prideaux* did not only suffer the said Earl of *Warwick* quietly to enjoy the said Forraign Office, but removed the Inland Office out of *Bartholmew Lane*, unto a sequestred house, and took the profits to himself, saying, that he carried Letters by the Liberty of the Subject,

Thereupon the said *Henry Robinson*, well knowing that he could deal with the said *Prideaux* at his own weapon of the Liberty of the Subject, if it might as well have been permitted him. The said *H. Robinson* (far before any other undertakers thought thereon) through the insight he had in the said Offices, being well assured, That if he undertook to carry Letters thrice a Week, Whereas the said *Prideaux* carried but once; And if he the said *Robinson* would take but 3<sup>d</sup> for a single Letter, whereas the said *Prideaux* took 6<sup>d</sup>, that there would be sent, for time to come, above  
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*six three penny Letters for every six penny Letter which had been sent in the said Prideaux his time, resolved upon sending thrice a week, and to take but 3<sup>d</sup> for a single Letter at the most, and for Scotland, Ireland, and Forraign Parts, accordingly, and to make more sure work, (as he had cause to hope) did take the subscriptions of most considerable Merchants and others, in and about London, York, New-Castle, Exeter, Plymouth, Bristol, and other Parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and forraign parts (which are yet extant to be seen) thereby obliging themselves, so far as the Laws of the Land and the Liberty of the Subject did permit, to send all their Letters, both Inland and Forraign, unto the said Henry Robinson, whensoever he would undertake the conveyance of them upon the terms aforesaid; and in order thereunto the said Henry Robinson settled Post-Stages up and down from one end of England unto the other, provided with sufficient number of Post-horses for that purpose, and made several Journeys into France, Flanders, Brabant, and the united Provinces, for treating with his Agents, and settling his Correspondents in Forraign Parts, all at his own particular costs and charges; and just as he was ready to publish the same, and give notice to all persons, when, and to what places they should begin to bring their Letters; the said Long Parliament on the 21. of March 1649. through misinformation of the said Prideaux, made these following Resolves, viz.*

*Resolved, by the Parliament, That the Offices of Postmaster Inland and Forraign, are and ought to be in the sole Power and disposal of the Commonwealth.*

*Resolved by the Parliament, That it be referred unto the Council of State to consider of the Offices of Postmasters, and of the interest of those persons who claim anything therein, and to take into consideration, how the same may be settled in the best way, for the advantage and safety of the Commonwealth, and report their opinions therein to the House, and that they take order for the present management thereof in the mean time.*

Hereupon (though the said Prideaux still continued to manage and enjoy the profits of the Inland Office) the said Robinson, fearing he might by the power of his opposers, be made an offender, was disabled to proceed further in carrying Letters, both by the liberty of the Subject, and the authority derived unto him from the said Charles Lord Stanhop, Postmaster General of England, and the Dominions thereunto belonging.

But the said contrivance of sending Letters thrice a Week instead of once,

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once, and taking but 3<sup>d</sup> for a single Letter instead of 6<sup>d</sup>, being thus discovered by the said Henry Robinson, was several years after indulged by Oliver mis-called Protector, to be put in execution by others, whereby the Office became forthwith improved, and so thought worthy to be annexed unto the Crown Revenue.

The said Henry Robinson therefore, whose Title being such unto the management and profits of the said Offices, and by whose contrivance, charge, and trouble, the said Offices had been so much improved, as well to the benefit of the said Offices, as to the increase of Trade and Correspondency, to the great content and accommodation of the people in general, having undergone the trouble, vexation, charge and damage, of above twenty yeares prosecution and attendance, did then humbly pray to be relieved therein, and that he might be restored to the possession and management of both the said Offices, as he was before at the first assembling of the said long Parliament.

*Henry Robinson.*



